

Sean Griffin

From: Harold Cook <hc@haroldcook.com>
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2011 9:29 AM
Subject: DEM CAUCUS: Attn press secs

Press Secretaries/Communication Directors:

The Houston Chronicle has a scathing editorial against the voter ID bill this morning, so that feels good:

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/7405353.html>

I have to admit, however, that I am at odds with many Senate offices over the impact of anything appearing on an op-ed page of a major daily newspaper these days. There are Senate offices which shoot off an op-ed every time a major issue comes before them, and many of the newspapers print them. I frankly believe the impact of these efforts is **zero**.

Such a small percentage of the electorate is reading the op-ed pages any more, the pages have been left to only the most informed of voters, and only a small number of even them - virtually all of whom have already formed a strongly-held opinion on just about every issue under the sun. Persuasive arguments on op-ed pages have become like a tree falling in the woods which nobody is there to hear.

Governor Perry was the first one to put this to a full test, when he blew off editorial board endorsement meetings, ceding all newspaper endorsements to Hutchison in the primary, and White in the general. His electoral results speak for themselves.

Similarly, every newspaper in the state scathingly and repeatedly editorialized against 2003 mid-decade redistricting, and against 2007 and 2007 voter I.D. The needle didn't move a bit on public opinion regarding either of these two issues.

If your office wants to place a guest op-ed in a newspaper, by all means do so - it provides something to copy and send around to like-minded supporters who need to know that your Senator stands with them on an issue. But for anybody who still believes that these efforts succeed in pushing any kind of broad-based message to any segment of the electorate whatsoever, I would recommend that you invest the time elsewhere, because it just simply does not.

Personally I haven't bothered to recommend to any client, political or non-political, that they attempt to place a guest opinion-editorial in a newspaper in several years.

That's my two cents, adjusted for inflation. However, in the Pitts base budget, I note that it's down to 0.00001 cent.